



Nathalie Ginoux et Laurent Olivier (dir.)

*LES IMAGES ET LES FORMES. FRANÇOISE HENRY (1902-1982),
LES HÉRITAGES D'UNE ŒUVRE PIONNIÈRE*

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DR FRANÇOISE HENRY (1902-1982)

ASPECTS OF METHODOLOGY OF A QUAEATOR OF IRISH MEDIEVAL ART

Lynda Mulvin

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Dr Françoise Henry (1902-1982)

Aspects of methodology of a quaestor of Irish Medieval Art

Lynda Mulvin

Old gods I know the past I know the future (Seamus Heaney, 'January God', Boa Island, 1972)¹

Introduction

Dr Françoise Henry (1902–1982) had a profound influence on the historiography of Irish art. As a leading authority on Irish medieval art for over fifty years, she possessed a vivid and investigative intellect. She noted, recorded, and published extensively on Irish medieval art, developing a comprehensive scholarship in the field. As a woman writing about art in Ireland during the twentieth century, Henry made a significant and reflective contribution to the knowledge of Irish art in Europe, shifting the paradigm. She was committed to defining art historical sequences in terms of the cohesion and continuity of form pertaining to early Irish medieval art. This was supported by her archaeological approach, with an interest in the ethnography of archaeology and the technology of making early Irish medieval art. This contribution explores aspects of her methodology and work practice to acknowledge the life and work of one of Europe's great medievalists, Dr Françoise Henry².

1 Seamus Heaney, « *January God* », in Helen Hickey, *Images of Stone. Figure sculpture of the Lough Erne basin*, Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1976. Terence Philip Flanagan (1929-2011) *Illustrated copy of Seamus Heaney Poem*, « January God », Belfast, Northern Ireland Arts Council, 1972.

2 There are two major archives of Françoise Henry with material deposited in the Royal Irish Academy Library papers (RIA) C/21/1–2/Henry and in UCD Archive, refer for details on early collections and materials also UCD Papers of Françoise Henry (d. 1982), contents include visual material consisting mainly of notes, drawings, and plans, documenting early Christian Irish art, its inspiration and the extent of its influence in Europe, in areas including architecture, sculpture, manuscripts, metalwork, ivory and textiles.
<https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ivrla:11593>

For more on Henry see (RIA) Library information, consult: Peter Harbison www.ria.ie/francoise-henry-and-history-irish-art Royal Irish Academy Library papers: Henry, Françoise, MRIA, 1902–1982; Marsh-Micheli, Geneviève Louise AP 1945/71 (RRG/6/F); *C/21/1–2/Henry offpr./5 I am grateful to the Librarians of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), who freely gave of their time to provide access to this extensive archive of Henry papers. I am grateful to the librarians of the UCD Archives and UCD Special Collections, who freely gave of their time to provide access to this extensive archive of Henry papers. UCD School of Archaeology holds a digital archive of Henry's photograph collection referred here later.

Françoise Henry was born in Paris in 1902 during the exuberance of Fin-de-siècle politics; her father, René Henry, was a professor at the École libre des Sciences politiques and part of the political administration during a period of particular cultural development³. Henry's maternal grandfather, Charles Clément (1821–1887), was a philosopher and artist who significantly influenced her formation. Henry attended the Lycée Molière in Paris and continued her studies at the Sorbonne⁴. Training as an archaeologist, she apprenticed with Henri Hubert (1872–1927), known for his work on the Celts, and Henri Focillon (1881–1943), Professor of Art History at the Sorbonne⁵. Focillon published a volume on Romanesque sculpture, focusing on tradition and iconography⁶. These connections led Henry to become involved at the Musée des Antiquités Nationales from 1927 onwards⁷. French empirical methods were central to Henry's formation and essential to establishing her unique methodology, which underlay a representative approach to cataloguing and forming a logical structure. These profound methodologies were structural tenets that underpinned her work. She brought an innate spirit of independence to her studies and her researching of antiquities in the landscape led her to moving freely between recording and writing the French historical and archaeological tradition and chronicling the Irish historical tradition. To this, she brought a profound understanding of the European cultural context, viewed with her unique aerial perspective⁸.

During her lifetime, Henry published numerous journals, articles, and books on Irish medieval art. She applied herself to the extraordinary task of recording Irish art and interpreting it in a lasting manner⁹. Henry left a large legacy, which survives with an extensive list of publications compiled by her student Hilary Richardson (1945–2015). A substantial collection of her papers and photographs is maintained in the UCD archive and the UCD Digital repository, divided between the Royal Irish Academy and University College Dublin, with additional material in the Royal Society of Antiquaries Library¹⁰.

3 Deborah Wye and Audrey Isselbacher, « The Exuberant Prints of Fin-de-Siècle Paris », *MoMA*, Summer 1997, No. 25, p. 20-23.

4 Royal Irish Academy Library papers (RIA) C/21/1–2/Henry. <https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ivrla:11593>.

5 For further contextual details, see Laurent Olivier, *La Mémoire et le Temps. L'œuvre transdisciplinaire d'Henri Hubert (1872-1927)*, Paris, Demopolis, 2018, p. 211-222; and Henri Hubert, *Les Celtes et l'expansion celtique jusqu'à l'époque de La Tène*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1932.

6 For Henri Focillon, professeur d'archéologie et du Moyen Âge, consult; Henri Focillon, *L'Art des sculpteurs romans, recherches sur l'histoire des formes*, Paris, E. Leroux, 1931, and Françoise Henry, Geneviève Louise Marsh-Micheli, « Henri Focillon, professeur d'archéologie du Moyen Âge », *La Gazette des beaux-arts*, 25, 1945, p. 35-44; James White, « Françoise Henry », *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Winter 1975, vol. 64, No. 256, p. 307-312.

7 F. Henry, « Un domaine nouveau de l'histoire de l'art: l'art irlandais du VIII^e siècle et ses origines », *La Gazette des beaux-arts*, 17, 1937, p. 131-144; Lynda Mulvin, « Some Thoughts on Arthur Kingsley Porter and Françoise Henry as Transcultural Pioneers of Early Irish Medieval Art », in Paula Murphy and Cynthia Fowler (eds.), *Art History at the Crossroads of Ireland and the United States*, London, Routledge, 2022, p. 40-46.

8 F. Henry, « Les Origines de l'iconographie irlandaise », *Revue archéologique*, 5^e Série, t. 32, 1930, p. 89-109; *Ead.*, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*, London, Methuen & Co., 1940, p. 2-8.

9 Cecil L. Curle and Eileen Kane, « Françoise Henry », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 112, 1982, p. 142-146. See also, L. Olivier, *La Mémoire et le Temps*, *op. cit.*, p. 211-227.

10 Hilary Richardson, « Bibliography of Dr Françoise Henry », *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 64, No. 256, Winter 1975, p. 313-325.

Henry visited Ireland in 1926 and begun a thesis for the École du Louvre on Irish medieval sculpture, with a focus on Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, Co. Tipperary – an impactful period of formation¹¹. The selection of images from her early career in Ireland presents a distinct opportunity to showcase her *œuvre* in practice as an archaeologist and art historian from the early 1930s. She established the History of European Painting and Archaeology in 1934, supported by a bequest funded by Sarah Purser and Sir John Griffith, and later served as Director of Studies in Archaeology and History of Painting at University College Dublin: in this she educated a whole cadre of students and art historians¹². The lecture series continued under the guidance of Dr Eileen Kane and is currently directed by Carla Briggs, who teaches the UCD Diploma in the History of European Painting¹³. Henry's dedication to teaching Irish medieval art was recently acknowledged as a great contribution to Irish art, with discussions on her varied writing contributions published by her friend Cecil Curle, and her former student Dr Eileen Kane, an art historian formerly of the UCD Department of Art History¹⁴. Richardson also compiled a bibliography of Henry's work, describing it as a guiding handbook of source material and noting how Henry inherited the world of George Petrie (1790–1866) and Margaret McNair Stokes (1832–1900), who were her great sources of inspiration¹⁵.

Iterative Process of Drawing and Methodology

As Henry pursued her studies in Irish medieval art during the 1930s, she influenced the international discourse. She developed an archaeological method of viewing sites and monuments with interdisciplinary synergy, using archaeological stratigraphy to linking different strands of research to produce new connective tissue and ways of seeing Irish medieval art. She referenced building technology and ornament as leading agents in interpreting stylistic periods of continuity in Irish medieval art. She considered relative detailed decoration of ornament on carved stone, as much a feature of Irish art, as the development of manuscript illumination and its correlation with metalwork. This work presents unpublished drawings by Henry, showcasing her innate skill, ability and intuitive nature to demonstrate her understanding of Irish art as a continuous progression¹⁶.

11 F. Henry, *Irish Art in the Romanesque Period* (London, 1970). 172–176 and see F. Henry, « Les Origines de l'iconographie irlandaise .. op.cit, p. 89–109.

12 John O'Grady, *The Life and Work of Sarah Purser*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1996, p. 134–136.

13 <https://www.ucd.ie/arhistory/study/diplomapurser-griffithlectures/> Course Director Carla (NUI) MA. I am grateful to Carla Briggs. See also C. Curle and E. Kane, « Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 142–146. Dr Eileen Kane addressed the Women in art series, spoke about Dr Françoise Henry, her contribution to Royal Irish Academy/UCD Seminar series: *Françoise Henry, Towards a history of Art History in Ireland, Royal Irish Academy, June 2018*. Carla Briggs, Lynda Mulvin, Paula Murphy, Nicola Figgis, (eds.), *Art History after Françoise. 50 years at UCD, 1965–2015*, Dublin/Kinsale, Gandon, 2016. Grateful thanks are due to Dr Kane and Dr Laurent Olivier, contributors at this insightful conference and freely gave up their time for discussion about the life and work of Dr Françoise Henry. <https://podcasts.apple.com/jm/podcast/fran%C3%A7oise-henry-by-dr-eileen-kane/id656731823?i=1000411104710>.

14 <https://www.ucd.ie/arhistory/newsandevents/1965-2015celebratingarthistoryatucd/> for Dr Eileen Kane, Art Historian, formerly of UCD Department of Art History (1967–2000). See C. Curle and E. Kane, « Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 142–146.

15 H. Richardson, « Bibliography of Dr Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 313–325.

16 Several collections of Papers of Françoise Henry are extant, deposited in online archive digital repository of University College Dublin (UCD) and the Library of the Royal Irish Academy of Ireland; UCD School of Archaeology 10,000 photographs available for consultation in thumbnail as an online resource.

Henry's art history evolved from an appreciation of prehistoric art forms in advance of Celtic art and sought continuity with early Christian art in Ireland as an unbroken tradition on the extremity of Europe¹⁷. Her methodology is explored, demonstrating the scope of her work as one of the leading exponents of early Christian art in Ireland in the twentieth century¹⁸. Henry worked towards a catalogue with each topic headlined as a starting point: High Crosses as carved ornaments in the landscape; manuscripts as tangible objects presented in connected contexts related to monasteries and external connections in Europe. She acknowledged the longevity of the development of sculptural styles, which coexisted with metalwork, painting, and architecture. She viewed early Irish medieval art as a continuity of forms, highlighting complexities of origin stemming from a history of Celtic art as it pertained to Ireland, with salient examples of sites and monuments situated within a topographic landscape. As she proceeded, her thematic approach became the central thread running through her work, with divergences explored in short articles and major strands in her monographs. The themes were divided into categories in terms of ornament and the systematic array of Celtic art to early medieval art placed in a chronological and systematic order.

In her publications, Henry developed a compelling narrative that brought a chronological and historical perspective to the account of Irish art forms within the context of European medieval art and archaeology. Her written work centred on sculpture and proceeded in a direction presenting the distinct identity of Irish art as it developed from Ireland, a remote island, in relation to the European mainland. Over time, a certain hierarchical division of the crafts emerged, with the illuminated manuscript as the highest art form, followed by the manufacture and iconography of sculpture, including Irish High Crosses and associated metalwork within buildings and architecture. These divisions concentrated on different building types, such as the Round Tower, joined by discussions defining the characteristics of Irish Romanesque architecture¹⁹.

Henry formed a valuable bridge to the past, linking eighteenth-century Hibernian antiquarian scholarship with nineteenth- and twentieth-century advances in the sciences of recording, drawing upon many sources, including Gabriel Béranger (1729–1817), George Petrie (1790–1866), William Reeves (1815–1892) and Margaret McNair Stokes (1832–1900)²⁰. She also explored the research

17 Rachel Moss, « Iconography and Meaning », in. (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland*, vol. I, *Medieval, c. 400–1600* New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014, p. 30. See L. Mulvin, « Identity and shifting attitudes in Medieval Europe », in Wim Hupperetz, Lynda Mulvin, Michael Schmauder (eds), *Crossroads: Travelling through the Middle Ages, AD 300–600*, Zwolle, W Books, 2017, p. 174–181, and for context of Irish medieval landscape and monastic settlement: more generally, Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland and the Medieval World, AD 400–100, Landscape, Kingship and Religion*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2014, p. 1–35.

18 Christopher Loveluck and Aidan O'Sullivan, « Travel, Transport and Communication to and from Ireland, c. 400–1100 », in Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (eds), *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe. Identity, Culture and Religion*, London, Palgrave, 2016, p. 19–38.

19 For Romanesque architectural detailing, see Arthur Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical architecture with some notice of similar or related work in England, Scotland and elsewhere*, Dublin, G. Bell & Sons, 1910, Pl. XVI; Harold Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, volume I, *The first phases and the Romanesque*, Dundalk, Dun Dalgan Press, 1955, p. 5–16. Esp. discussion of early architecture single chambered structures would be influential on Henry later in her writings on dry-stone churches.

20 Paul Walsh, « George Petrie: his life and work », in Próinséas Ní Cháthain, Siobhan Fitzpatrick and Howard B. Clarke (eds.), *Pathfinders to the Past. The Antiquarian Road to Irish Historical Writing, 1640–1960*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1912, p. 44–71; Ann Hamlin, « William Reeves », in *ibid.*, p. 86–98; Lady Wilde, « Memoir of Gabriel Beranger, and His Labours in the Cause of Irish Art, Literature, and Antiquities from 1760 to 1780, with Illustrations (Commenced by

of contemporary scholars and wrote in relation to insights by Ernst Kitzinger (1912–2003), Henry S. Crawford (1868–1927), Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883–1933) and Harold Leask (1882–1964), among others²¹. These scholars had different impacts on the contents of her early medieval art studies.

To develop drawing skills and accuracy in visual analysis, Henry made many drawings of architecture and sculpture as part of her methodology for recording Irish art. The linear series of sketches shows arches and sculptural details, with a central focus on the great window from the monastic site of Glendalough and the sculptures from one of the Seven Churches in Co. Wicklow²². The expeditions to Glendalough were highly renowned, and the relatively intact nature of the monuments rendered satisfying results. Glendalough became a favourite site for recording by antiquarian artists of the eighteenth century²³. Records from Edward Ledwich (1737–1883), Irish historian and topographer, Francis Grose (1731–1791), Gabriel Béranger (1729–1817) and Angelo Bigari (1772–1835) survive, with at least two expeditions under the agency of the Hibernian Antiquarian Society²⁴. Henry's drawing details for the sculptural window of the Cathedral at Glendalough depicted architectural details of the voussoirs and a relief-carved impost moulding, which has not survived (Fig. 1 and Fig. 1a)²⁵. Her approach to drawing demonstrated a range of techniques involved in these early recordings, reproducing details as Béranger, Grose and Petrie had also made. In one sketch drawing, Henry copied details of the cathedral window from Glendalough after the drawing of Petrie²⁶. Petrie worked after eighteenth-century drawings, and the impost moulding was rendered by different antiquarians. Several published descriptions were available, with the most detailed and accurate of the impost, which is no longer visible. The sketch drawings detailed a linear progression, showing the structural motif of the arch with ornament

Sir William Wilde, vol. II., Fourth Series, p. 485) », *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association*, vol. IV, No. 28, Oct. 1876, p. 111-156. For Margaret Stokes's papers refer to the Royal Irish Academy Library (RIA), Margaret Stokes, RR/66/O/18. See also Margaret Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, London, Chapman and Hall, « South Kensington Guides », 1887. Among her other publications, consult M. Stokes, *Early Christian Architecture in Ireland*, London, George Bell & Sons, 1878 and *High Crosses of Castledermot and Durrow*, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1898. Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Medieval Irish Buildings, 1100-1600*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2015).

21 Dorothy Kelly, « Henry Saxon Crawford, quintessential antiquary », in P. Ní Chathain, S. Fitzpatrick and H. B. Clarke (eds.), *Pathfinders to the Past...*, *op. cit.*, p. 144-160; Ernst Kitzinger, *Early Medieval Art, with illustrations from the British Museum and British Library collections*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1940, p. 46-66, esp. Carolingian art.

22 <https://glendalough.ie/heritage/monastic-city/> see Royal Irish Academy, FH-B7-253/2, Glendalough Cathedral window detail.

23 P. Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham and His Irish circle of Antiquarian Artists*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2012, p. 31-37.

24 See discussions in *ibid.*, p. 39-43.

25 Royal Irish Academy, FH-B7-253/2, Timahoe, Co. Laois, Round tower doorway detail; The chancel arch of St Mocaneog, Liathmore, Co. Tipperary, and details for sculptural window of the Cathedral Glendalough, Co. Wicklow.

26 Copies of drawings of Priest's house after Gabriel Béranger and Daniel Grose depicted details of sculpture and carvings from certain eighteenth-century expeditions. See discussions in P. Harbison, *William Burton Conyngham*, *op. cit.*, p. 40-43, esp. Fig. 37 Béranger's drawings of relief sculpture. Roger Stalley (ed.), *Daniel Grose (c.1766-1838), The Antiquities of Ireland. A supplement to Francis Grose*, Dublin, Irish Architectural Archive, 1991, p. 144-147; Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Ireland*, ed. Edward Ledwich, London, S. Hooper, 1791; see also for detail on Béranger, William Wilde, « Memoir of Gabriel Béranger and his labours in the cause of Irish art Literature and Antiquities from 1760 to 1780 », *Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*, vol. I and II, 1870-1876; F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 92, reference to Glendalough and Aghowle and Glendalough, p. 95.

and decoration of a Celtic curvilinear nature and details of the stylisation in figurative art visible in the surrounds of these early medieval stone church structures. The drawing is a precise copy from



Fig.1 : Françoise Henry, Pencil Drawing, Left to Right: Doorway Round Tower, Timahoe, Co. Laois, Chancel Arch, St Mocaneog Temple, Co. Tipperary, Window Detail, Glendalough Cathedral, Co. Wicklow, and Sculpture at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy)

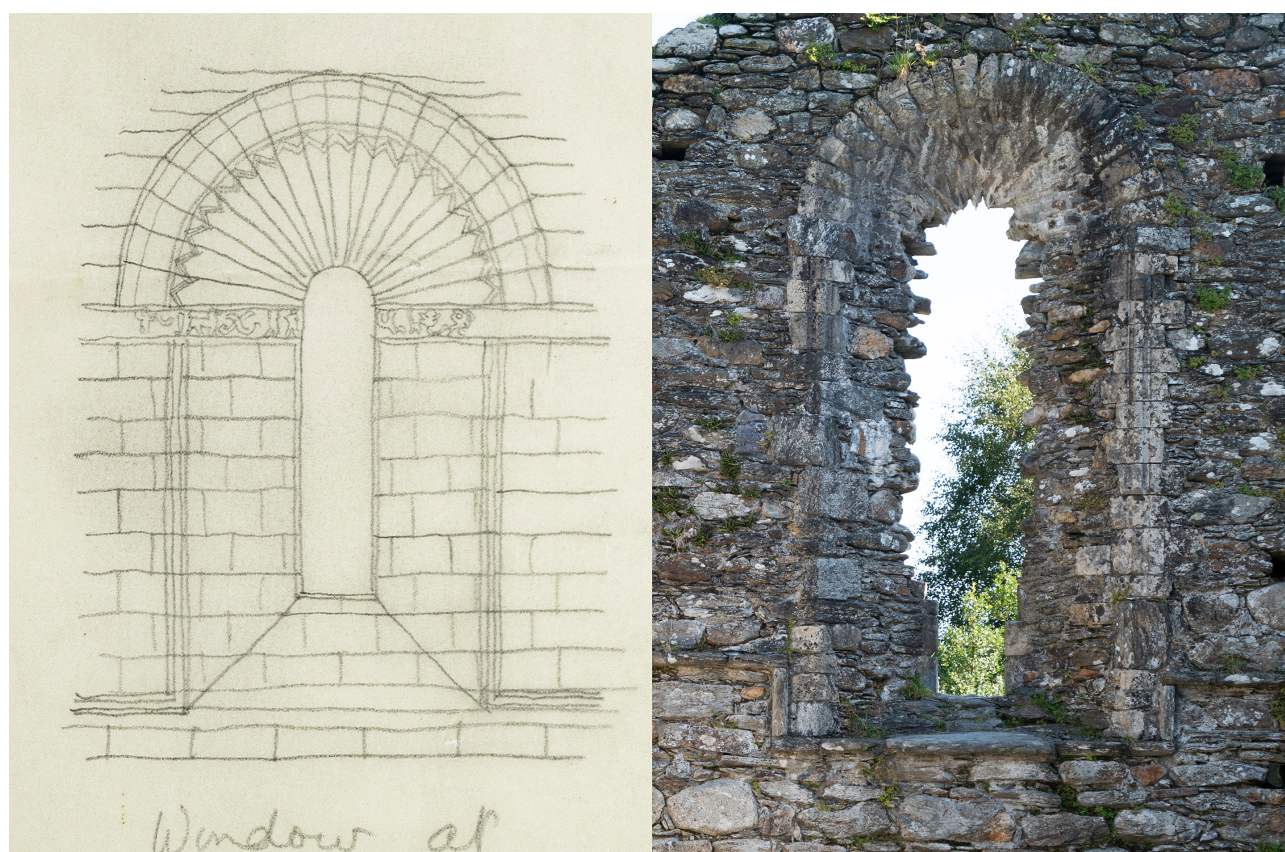


Fig 1a : Françoise Henry, Pencil Drawing Window Detail, Glendalough Cathedral, Co. Wicklow (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy). Paired with author's photograph

the Glendalough Cathedral Window and Sculpture at Glendalough. Petrie recalled, 'I have next to notice the curious fragments of ornamental architecture,' as the round-headed arch with relief sculpture was clearly indicated²⁷.

Other sketches included the Timahoe, Co. Laois, Round Tower doorway opening, also sculpted and dated to the twelfth century. In her sketch, Henry depicted and demonstrated the Romanesque decorative detailing and zoomorphic ornament. The Round Tower was central to the monastic site at Timahoe, with the entrance doorway of ceremonial purpose over 4 metres above ground, facing South to a later medieval church building. Few Round Towers had decorated doorways, and Henry brought attention to the carvings. In this sketch, the piers converged in a localised fashion with capitals in frieze format and corner masks of bearded men, linked by interlace patterns, uniting the stepped doorway detail and sculptural mouldings. Henry produced an angled curved drawing, transforming the details of the curved surface. She presented construction details of projections and added to the mapping process in this instance²⁸. Leask also recorded construction details in his study of Irish Romanesque architecture, using drawings with a plan to provide visual context and distinguish the features²⁹. Henry used a wide-angled perspective, anticipating the camera lens. Her examinations illustrated certain questions and solutions provided by her wider-angled drawing techniques³⁰.

A third sketch on this trial practice sheet by Henry depicted another arched motif: the chancel arch with great stone voussoirs of the church of St. Mochoemog, Liathmore, Ballyshane, Co. Tipperary. The drawings were without scale. St. Mochoemog was an early Irish abbot, born around AD 550, associated with Liath-Mochoemoc³¹. St. Mochoemog Church was depicted as having a wide splayed chancel arch measuring 20 feet in length, with regular masonry quoined. In her first English publication on Irish local mythology, she postulates the dating accuracy cited by Leask detailing a round-headed window³². Henry's interdisciplinarity enabled her to cross over into architecture and architectural history, discussing the fabric of buildings within an historical context. These cross-disciplines created a broader historical context for these monuments. Henry combined field survey and research of sites and monuments with the historical perspective to create a detailed methodology and historical narrative. This approach brought a more conclusive view of the evolution of building materials via her drawings of arches and window details.

27 George Petrie, *The Ecclesiastical architecture of Ireland anterior to the Anglo-Norman invasion; comprising an essay on the origin and uses of the round towers of Ireland*, Dublin, Hodges and Smith, 1845, p. 253. I am grateful to Cormac Bourke for sharing supporting information about George Petrie.

28 F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

29 H. G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, *op. cit.*, p. 62-63.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 62-63, p. 107-109, Pl. VI; Leask referred to Henry more accurate dating ninth to tenth to eleventh century; F. Henry, *La Sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne*, Paris, Librairie E. Leroux, 1933, p. 75.

31 H. G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, *op. cit.*, p. 62-63, https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/StMochoemog_Liathmore, interior looking east.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 62-63.

Biographical Studies and Formation of Methodology

The remarkable legacy of Dr Françoise Henry has already been the subject of biography as one of the great medievalists³³. She had a deep connection to the landscape of Ireland and was described as 'une femme des champs' by her grandfather, artist Charles Clément (1821–1887), a reference to her expansive nature and pioneering spirit. This indicated that she possessed an inquisitive nature and drive to capture and understand the historical and social record of Irish medieval art, coming from the great tradition of fieldwork and *quaestoring*, drawing, observing, recording and writing³⁴. Clément was Henry's maternal grandfather, who significantly influenced her methodology and formation from an early age. She shared his traits as a painter and art historian, which singularly influenced her œuvre. As an artist, his connection to the great painters of the nineteenth century and his œuvre as a realist painter displayed progressive modernist theories of art expressed in his work. Clément published extensively and produced a catalogue raisonné of Théodore Géricault (1794–1824)³⁵. As a curator in the ephemeral Musée Napoléon III at the Petit Palais, Paris, from 1861 to 1862, he compiled a catalogue on jewellery for the exhibition³⁶. His work compiling a catalogue was an inspiration to Henry, who later compiled a similar catalogue at the Musée des Antiquités nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye.

Henry was a student at the École du Louvre under the great Celticist Henri Hubert, who guided her studies. She also studied medieval art with Émile Mâle (1862–1954) and Henri Focillon, her art history professor. She became part of the activities at the Musée des Antiquités nationales, where she was based in from 1925. While there, she began to make an inventory of prehistoric Brittany, focusing on the work of archaeologist Paul Du Chatellier (1833–1911). This involved a systematic registration giving every artefact a number. She investigated prehistoric tumuli and funerary monuments of the département de la Côte-d'Or, le char de la Butte à Sainte-Colombe-sur-Seine, of Iron Age material culture of Northeast France, resulting in her earliest publication, *Les Tumulus du département de la Côte-d'Or*, in 1926³⁷. This gave her an innate understanding of the ethnography of archaeological materials, as she was immersed in the context of Celtic archaeology.

33 P. Harbison, « Celtic culture in context », *Irish Arts Review* Winter, 2002, p. 120-123. Refer to Royal Irish Academy, <https://www.ria.ie/news/dictionary-irish-biography/dib-women-walls-francoise-henry> and James White also recently recorded her acts of great scholarship.

34 I am grateful to the advice and access provided to archives by the librarians of the Royal Irish Academy, National Library of Ireland, University College Dublin Special Collections, UCD Digital Archives as the papers were transferred from the UCD School of Archaeology to UCD archives. Deputy Librarian Royal Irish Academy Meadhbh Murphy, Rebecca Cairns and Konstantine Ermolin; Evelyn Flanagan UCD Special Collections for their kind assistance with the images used. UCD School of Archaeology for consultation of image database for Françoise Henry photographs. Conor Mc Dermott, UCD School of archaeology, facilitating the access to the FH photographic archive.

35 Charles Clément, *Géricault : étude biographique et critique, avec le catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre du maître*, Paris, Didier, 1968, p. 98-99. See also *Charles Clément. 1889-1972. Exposition rétrospective*, Lausanne, musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1973; Charles Clément papers, 1838-1887, Getty Research Institute https://primo.getty.edu/permalink/f/mlc50m/GETTY_ALMA21126850940001551_86-A1442.

36 L. Olivier, « Françoise Henry (1902-1982) Une héritière sans trône ni royaume », in *La Mémoire et le Temps*, op. cit., p. 211-231. <https://arthistorians.info/clementc> best known for Clément writings on Théodore Géricault (1794-1824), refer to Laurent Haumesser (dir.), *Un Musée éphémère : Le musée Napoléon III au palais de l'Industrie, mai-octobre 1862*, Paris, Louvre éditions/Mare & Martin, 2021, p. 22-36.

37 F. Henry, *Les Tumulus du département de la Côte-d'Or*, Paris, Ernst Leroux, 1926.

In 1926, Henry visited Ireland to study sites and monuments, including the Ahenny Crosses in County Tipperary and the High Crosses of Ossory, Co. Kilkenny. She saw the potential to make a study in the field of Irish medieval art. As her focus was sculpture, she took the unique Romanesque Cormac's Chapel on the Rock of Cashel for her master's work, making continental connections in terms of medieval architecture with references to Saint Killian of Würzburg. Her work was reviewed and published as her first article on Irish art³⁸.

Among her predecessors, archaeologist Margaret Mc Nair Stokes (1832–1900) had established typologies of Irish medieval art. Stokes, a kindred spirit and a woman writing on art, was a pathfinder for Henry and one of her greatest sources of inspiration in Irish concerns³⁹. In 1875, Stokes edited Edwin, Earl of Dunraven's *Notes on Architecture*, which initialised a methodological approach to Irish medieval art as a comment on Irish antiquarianism. Stokes established a typology of Irish medieval art from 1887, published as *South Kensington Victoria and Albert Guide on Early Christian Art in Ireland*, which received instant recognition⁴⁰. In this study, the practical elements of note-taking, writing, photography and drawing were situated within the framework of architecture⁴¹. In her publications on early Christian Art in Ireland, Stokes wrote about Irish scribes and scholars in Europe and their role in disseminating Irish art.

The peculiarity of Irish art may be said to be in the union of such primitive rhythmical design as are common to barbarous nations, with a style which accords with the highest laws of the arts of design, the exhibition of a fine architectural feeling in the distribution of the parts, and such delicate and perfect execution, whatever the material in which art was treated as much as command respect for the conscientious artist by whom the work was carried out⁴².

Regarding categorisation and methodologies of study, Stokes cited Petrie as an authority and major source on the subject for dating and classification, while she referred to Dunraven for illustrations⁴³. Stokes' categorisations were partly derived from her artistic interests, as she was involved in reproducing illuminated details of early Irish manuscripts, such as the Garland of Howth series, with magnificently ornated initial letters⁴⁴. Stokes was an excellent illustrator with a keen eye who produced a categorisation prefaced by a strong statement on Irish art and a table of concurrences at the back of her handbook. The separation of studies of Irish art has been noted, and

38 Ead., « La chapelle de Cormac, à Cashel. Note sur les influences étrangères en Irlande au début du XII^e siècle », Année 1927-1928, *Travaux des étudiants du groupe d'Histoire de l'art de la faculté des lettres de Paris précédés de quelques notes de Paul Valéry, de l'Académie française*. (Dedication In Memoriam : « Ce recueil est dédié à la mémoire de M. Gustave Fougères, membre de l'Institut, ancien directeur de l'École d'Athènes, professeur d'Archéologie grecque à la faculté des lettres de Paris, notre vénéré maître » (Paris, Institut d'art et d'archéologie, 1928), p. 10; The essays were reviewed by Jacques-Pierre Millotte sur la Franche-Comté et la Lorraine paper revue of students, Royal Chapel of Cormac on the Rock of Cashel Co. Tipperary.

39 L. Mulvin, « The diffusion of a Celtic artistic aesthetic in the art and architecture of continental Europe in the Early Middle Ages », in Gisela M. B. Holfer, Bettina Migge (ed.), *Ireland in the European Eye*, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 2019, p. 300-333.

40 Stokes was also known for *Early Christian architecture in Ireland* (1878) and *High Crosses of Castledermot and Durrow* (1898).

41 C. Curle, and E. Kane, « Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 142-146. H. Richardson, « Bibliography of Dr Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 313-325; J. White, « Françoise Henry », art. cit., p. 307-312.

42 M. Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, op. cit., p. VIII.

43 Edwin Richard Dunraven, *Notes on Irish Architecture*, ed. M Stokes, London, George Bell & Sons, 1875, p. 44-46.

44 Refer to Colleen Thomas: <https://www.tcd.ie/library/early-irish-mss/margaret-stokes-a-scholar-from-howth/>

while this publication was a summary guide on Irish art in the museum context, Stokes produced a chronological table as a reference, citing craftworkers for manuscripts, scribes, metalwork artisans, sculpture, architecture, and builders⁴⁵.

Françoise Henry was a talented artist whose first instinct in approaching field monuments was to draw. An unpublished drawing is presented here: the example of the west face of a pictorial high cross from Old Kilcullen, Cill Chuillinn, Co. Kildare, which demonstrates her distinctive use of line (Fig. 2)⁴⁶. This ink over pencil drawing, with an added black outline, was a pictorial depiction of the granite High Cross panel, depicting the biblical scene of the Flight into Egypt. This was the remaining third panel of the West-facing High Cross⁴⁷. Old Kilcullen, linked to St. Patrick and the nearby Royal site of Dun Ailinne⁴⁸, was a monastic settlement visited by Henry. The drawing was one of several, some of which were used to illustrate her study of *La Sculpture irlandaise*. From first principles, it is possible to understand her direct working methodology: her first impression captured in a sketch to create an original pictorial record of the object as an image. With a single line, she portrayed the essence of the biblical scene of the Flight into Egypt, depicted as a schematic impression of the Blessed Virgin on an ass facing right, with a prominent figure of Joseph leading the way. The scene was cited and known to Henry from Stokes' study⁴⁹, referenced in her sketch as 'ouest panneaux 1 et 2, Stokes p. 444' (Fig. 2). This drawing combines artistic expression and creativity. Henry's method involved looking, drawing, and recording as first principles, followed by photography as a second step⁵⁰.

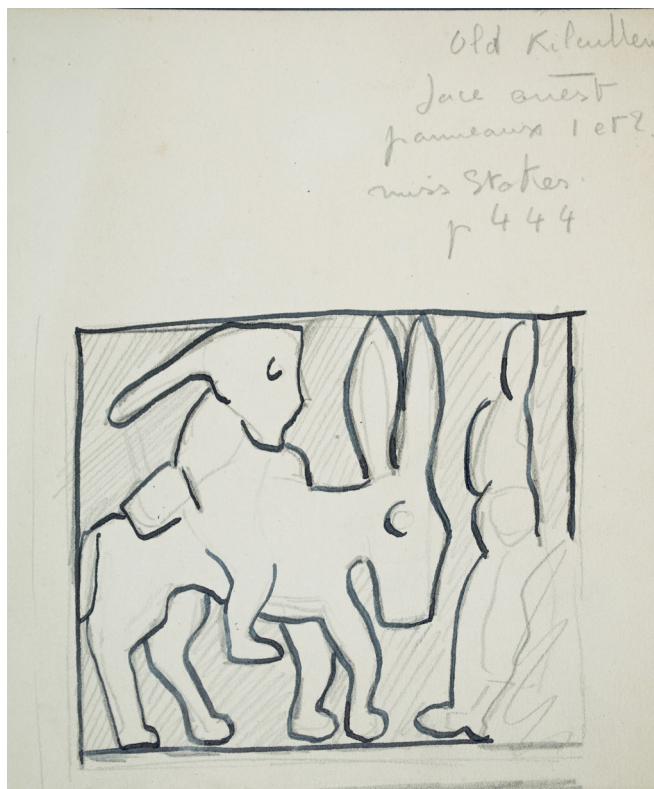


Fig 2 : Françoise Henry, Ink over Pencil, Old Kilcullen, Co. Kildare High Cross Shaft, West Face Panel (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy).

45 R. Moss, « Iconography and Meaning », *op. cit.*, p. 30. See also for a discussion pertaining to liturgical repertoire. See Roger Stalley, « European Art and The Irish High Crosses », *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 1990, p. 135-158.

46 Royal Irish Academy of Ireland, Papers of Françoise Henry, FH_B7_254_6.

47 See F. Henry, *La Sculpture irlandaise*, *op. cit.*, p. 138-140; Similarities to Cross of Moone and Flight into Egypt iconography discussed in her chapter on the « Figured Crosses », (F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 177).

48 See also Gearoid Ó h-Iceadha, « Excavation of Church Site in Old Kilcullen Townland, Co. Kildare », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Seventh Series, vol. 11, No. 4, Dec. 31, 1941, p. 148-151 who refers also to Timahoe. Refer to Dorothy Kelly, « The High Crosses of Ireland: A Review Article », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 1992, vol. 122, 1992, p. 67-78; Henry S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament from Irish Monuments of the Christian Period*, Dublin, Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1926, p. 2.

49 M. Stokes, « Old Kilcullen », *Journal of Kildare Archaeological Society*, vol. II, 1899, p. 431-446, esp. p. 444.

50 The photographic archive in UCD is divided between Manuscripts metalwork and architecture with most photographs from the architecture of sites category. Henry's legacy of systematic recording, of sketches, notes and over 10,000 archival photographs demonstrated her dedication to this process.

Henry's approach to recording early Christian remains involved a process of deduction, seeing eroded imagery with schematic line drawings aimed at conveying a flattening of volumes and reducing detail to a minimum. Stokes emphasised artistry, and Henry followed suit, practising drawing and reproducing images of Irish material as an accessible contribution to the study of manuscripts and Irish art more generally⁵¹. Stokes gathered invaluable information about the survival of manuscripts and related artefacts in various monastic libraries and town repositories across Europe⁵². The survival of these manuscripts in certain monastic libraries and town repositories was, according to Margaret Stokes, further testament to the spiritual attainments of early Irish Christian culture. Her succinct listing in the Early Christian art guide survives now as a unique catalogue of these art objects and artefacts⁵³. Henry sequentially sourced Irish manuscripts, used photography, and where not permissible or possible, introduced line drawings into her notes (Fig. 3). She sourced details and corresponded with leading scholar Ludwig Bieler, with archival letters indicating close debate on manuscript connections. The Manuscript *Codex Claromontanus*, Vatican Library, fol. 223r, coloured pencil drawing of the initial letter (Fig. 3)⁵⁴, shows the extent of exploring the effect of majuscule lettering and the initial letter, with rubrics of the colour red as a significant

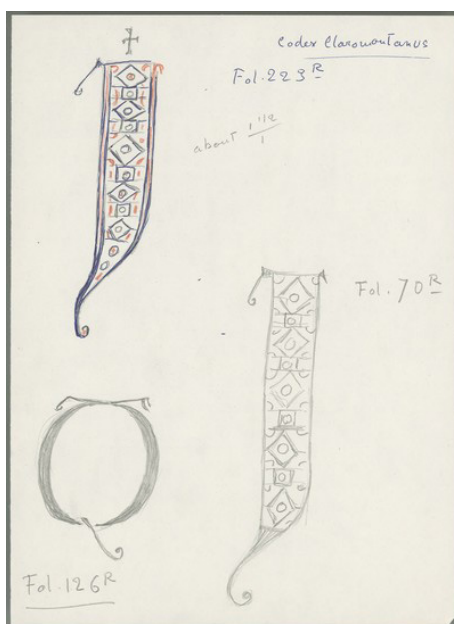


Fig 3 : Françoise Henry, Pencil study after *Manuscript Codex Claromontanus*, Vatican Library Fol. 223, Fol 70, Fol. 126 (Courtesy of University College Dublin Archives).

- 51 L. Mulvin, « Some Thoughts on Arthur Kingsley Porter and Françoise Henry as Transcultural Pioneers of Early Irish Medieval Art », art. cit., p. 44-47.
- 52 M. Stokes, *Six Months in the Apennines : or A pilgrimage in search of vestiges of the Irish saints in Italy*, London, George Bell & Sons, 1892, *Ead.*, *Three Months in the Forests of France : A Pilgrimage in Search of Vestiges of the Irish Saints in France*, New York/London, George Bell and Sons, 1895, p. 2-7; Pádraig A. Breathnach, « Irish Churchmen in Pre-Carolingian Europe », *Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha/Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society*, 11/2, 1985, p. 319-330.
- 53 M. Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland*, op. cit., p. 26- 27. See also *Ead.*, Royal Irish Academy, Special Collections (Special List A042). Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* [1995], London/New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 252-254.
- 54 Ludwig Bieler, *Ireland, Harbinger of the Middle Ages*, London/Oxford/New York/Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1963. Bieler also corresponded with Françoise Henry. See UCD Papers Of Françoise Henry, <https://digital.ucd.ie/viewmedia/ivrla:14054/canvas/ivrla:14063> UCD Archives, FH Papers were transferred from the UCD School of

highlight in the Initial. The influence of the study and reproduction of colour was significant, and the interconnections with carving were to be more fully explored by Henry, following Stokes's example, with the richness of Irish ornament in manuscript illumination considered a major achievement. Henry would later pursue this theme more fully in her monumental study on the Book of Kells⁵⁵.

Henry's doctoral thesis, presented under Henri Focillon at the Sorbonne, was titled *La Sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de notre ère* (1933). This work became a major source book for later studies, produced in Paris in 1933 and dedicated to Focillon. It marked the beginning of her synthesis on Irish art and situated her approach through periodisation. To assist with the categorisation of sculpture, she presented subject headings such as curvilinear decoration and interlace, reminiscent of identifications from Crawford's earlier study on Insular patterns⁵⁶. In *La Sculpture irlandaise*, the content was established sequentially, with pictorial designs ranging from secular themes of hunting and war to Christian iconography, including Adam and Eve, the Twelve Apostles, David as a Harpist, and Crucifixion scenes, among others. These were represented in *La Sculpture irlandaise*, volume one, with black and white renders in line drawings of thematic scenes and photographs in black and white in volume two (see Fig. 2). Her simple drawings illustrated headline pages in the book and were reproduced to highlight subjects of the iconographic panels from the Irish High Crosses. The Flight into Egypt from Old Kilcullen, which remained unpublished, was left aside as an unresolved identification in the published informative table (see Fig. 2)⁵⁷. Through this method of observation and sketch drawing from life, she examined the manufacturing process of medieval figure sculpture and re-evaluated Irish High Crosses and their medieval sculpture as form and narrative were linked to meaning and symbolism. She separated this from the chronological discourse and viewed the artistry as stylistic layers, assisting in the creation of varied sequences of early Irish sculpture.

Henry's work overlapped with the publication of internationally renowned scholar Arthur Kingsley Porter (1883–1933), who was in Ireland contemporaneously⁵⁸. Henry was intrigued by Porter's linking of the sources of Irish High Crosses to Eastern Mediterranean sources rather than Carolingian imagery⁵⁹. Porter was invested in mythologising cultural memory, while Henry sought

Archaeology to UCD archives. I am grateful to the Archivist at UCD for kind assistance with these images. See also more generally, G. L. Micheli, « Recherches sur les manuscrits irlandais décorés de Saint-Gall et de Reichenau », *Revue archéologique*, 6^e Série, t. VII, 1936, p. 189–223; Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, London, Harvey Miller, 1978, 6 vols., vol. 1, *Insular Manuscripts, Sixth to the Ninth century*, p. 76–77. For further ongoing research regarding Insular manuscripts on the continent and particularly, Vatican City, see Codices Online and University College Galway. <http://foundationsirishculture.ie/catalogue/>

55 See C. Thomas, <https://www.tcd.ie/library/early-irish-mss/margaret-stokes-a-scholar-from-howth/> and also Françoise Henry, *The Book of Kells: Reproductions from the Manuscript in Trinity College Dublin*, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1974.

56 H. S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament*, *op. cit.*, p. v.

57 F. Henry, *La Sculpture irlandaise*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 9 and p. 15–26. Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press/H. Milford/London University Press, 1931, pl. 186. See also for further reading by Arthur Kingsley Porter, and extensive library of publications: *Id.*, *Medieval Architecture, Its Origins and Development, with Lists of Monuments and Bibliographies*, New York, The Baker and Taylor Company, 1909, and *Id.*, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Boston, Marshall Jones Company, 1923, 10 vols, vol. 2, Illustrations.

59 F. Henry, « Les Origines de l'iconographie irlandaise », *art. cit.*, p. 89. See also L. Mulvin, « Some Thoughts on Arthur

comparative methodology and regional characteristics in carvings rather than relying wholly on cultural memory⁶⁰. Porter and Henry held divergent views: Henry focused on the detail of the iconography of pictorial imagery of the Irish High Cross as a specific identity piece connected to Irish artistic tradition, with continuity as a major contributor. Her assessment of folklore tales as connective tissue, linked to the Ossory crosses, was highlighted as relevant yet not the main source of the iconography⁶¹. Henry's reading of folk mythologies and connections to local history and the evidence of the production of monuments and transfer of knowledge was a significant element in her methodology. Overarching themes of early Christian iconography derived from European sources and compared in metalwork and stonework combined as a comprehensive trend underlying cultural heritage and faith systems in Medieval Europe.

Henry's synergistic survey of Irish art resulted in a series of steps that began with the systematic treatment by drawing and photography of the surroundings and details of specific sites and monuments undergoing her survey. This pattern was repeated for her fieldwork, which was a systematic approach to field survey and assisted in drawing conclusions used to substantiate the connections of Irish art in Europe. She developed an ongoing discussion and debate in publications, as the continuity of content was chronologically presented and supported by stylistic images manifested and connected during her fieldwork, with a view to elucidating Irish art in the context of medieval art in Europe. This was an essential part of the production of her polemical *Irish Art* book of 1940⁶².

Henry's interests in Irish medieval art overlapped with the collection and sampling of monuments published by Crawford as a study of sculpture in 1926⁶³. In photographic terms, Henry's approach to studying a monument demonstrates an influence from Crawford's recommendations of using raking light and shade:

Kingsley Porter and Françoise Henry... », art. cit., p. 44-47.

60 Carole Neuman de Vegvar, « In the Shadow of the Sidhe: Arthur Kingsley Porter's Vision of an Exotic Ireland », *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, vol. 17, 2001, p. 48-60. Porter determined this interpretation of an independent, autonomous Irish art, coinciding with the birth of the Irish Free State in 1922, combined with his interest in marginalized artistic developments such as Lombardic architecture, see A. K. Porter, *The Construction of Lombard and Gothic Vaults*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1911, p. 1-24.

61 Rose Springfield with a note by Françoise Henry, « The Seven Bishops: a legend of Ossory », *Old Kilkenny Review*, Nr 1, 1946-1947, January 1948, p. 34-37. See also L. Mulvin, « Ireland and Europe: Transmission of Celtic Aesthetic in the early Middle Ages », in W. Hupperetz, L. Mulvin, M. Schmauder *et al.* (eds), *Crossroads... op. cit.*, p. 78-86.

62 *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*, published by Methuen and Co., London, of Essex Street on the Strand in 1940, during the year of the WW2 London Blitz. It was illustrated with 30 collotype plates and text illustrations; it is dedicated to her devoted researchers Cecil Curle and Geneviève Louise Micheli. Henry relied on a simple Box Brownie camera work with 35 mm film and a ladder for aerial perspective. Photographic collection in UCD is essential for assessing Henry's oeuvre. Unfortunately, only around 200 have an indication of date but some of the descriptive fields may help in filtering. In addition, there are around 8 000 thumbnail images. For further information on UCD, Henry collection of archived photographs consult: Photographic Archive, UCD School of Archaeology, A/IE/295/1N – B/FR/251/10518N-C/ PT/533/10523P. This is a database of over 10,555 black and white photographs taken by Henry. I am grateful to Dr Conor McDermott and Professor Muiris O' Sullivan, UCD School of Archaeology, who freely gave of their time to enable access and free consultation of this archive. The ratio of photographs per subject is notable: Manuscripts 1 808; metalwork/Ivory/Textiles 1 060; Architecture and Architectural Sculpture 5 171; Sculpture 2 485.

63 H. S. Crawford, « A Descriptive List of Early Cross-slabs and Pillars », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 42, 1912, p. 217-244.

Photographs are the most accurate and satisfactory forms of illustration... Carvings of early date are generally so worn by the weather and have lost so much sharpness that they will not show at all clearly unless the light is just right both in quality and direction. It should be, at the same time, bright and diffused and should make with the plane of the surface an angle more or less acute according to the depth of the cutting and roughness of the stone⁶⁴.

Field notes for researching the fragmentary remains of the church at Aghowle, Co. Wicklow, are presented in these sheets (Fig. 4). As a method of working, Henry combined technical notes and observations from environmental descriptions to illustrated details, along with bibliographic details and drawings as well as photographs. The context of the setting was as relevant, and her written text served to position this building within the broader context of architectural history embedded in the wider narrative of European art. Her many publications, when taken together, form an extensive reference library, building a sequential structured dialogue between different art forms. This is featured within the pages of her many exceptional books and articles, as her work presented a new set of ideas to challenge existing theories of Irish art.

The preparation of a set of notes to publish Aghowle Church underlies a method of thoroughness: the photographs were fixed like a storyboard of ideas to the A4 sheet, and the drawings schematically reflect details of the church. The addition of a select bibliography and several photographs, one originally labelled 'H. S. Crawford, inside view,' suggests commonalities and shared practices, as she used Crawford's photograph in the final publication⁶⁵. Aghowle church was a long rectangular single cell with high gables and a granite west doorway, which had a decorated flat lintel outside and arch inside (Fig. 4)⁶⁶. The door was decorated with a Romanesque moulding on the outside. Crawford exerted considerable influence on Henry's methodology, and his photographic techniques had a strong bearing on Henry's work. The connection with the published works of Stokes and Crawford is of great significance in the growing discourse of the historiography of early Irish medieval art. Henry drew from their studies, combining technical notes, environmental observations, and illustrated details to form a chronology of Irish art.

In contrast, photographic images of the North Cross, Ahenny (Fig. 5), pointed to Henry's use of shadow and brightness caused by the light and shade effects of photography⁶⁷. The Ahenny North Cross, East face, in Henry's photograph, is at an angle viewpoint, with the setting giving a sense of scale and a shadow that gives depth to the interlace carving⁶⁸. In comparison, the photographic image used to present the impression of the High Cross by Kingsley Porter was a full-frontal exposure of Ahenny, North Cross, West face, from a photograph from the studio of Thomas Holmes

64 *Id.*, *Handbook of Carved Ornament*, *op. cit.*, p. 2, wrote about the significance of light and shade and the camera highlighting sensitivities of carving. Likely the Kodak Box Brownie was the camera in use.

65 F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 4, Pl. 32 is a photograph labelled in her notes H. S. Crawford, which suggested shared practices. Henry S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament*, *op. cit.*, see his notes on Ahenny, North Cross, p. 4-5. Tomás Ó Carragáin, « Skeuomorphs and spolia: the presence of the past in Irish pre-Romanesque architecture », in R. Moss (ed.), *Making and meaning in Insular Art*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2007, p. 95-109.

66 Royal Irish Academy, FH-B7_252_2 Aghowle (Wicklow).

67 George Coffey, *Royal Irish Academy Collection; Guide to the Celtic Antiquities of the Christian Period Preserved in the National Museum Dublin*, London, Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1909. Crawford learnt from his predecessor Coffey about the quality of light to make angles clearly, see H. S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament*, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

68 F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, « North Cross Ahenny », pl. 38.

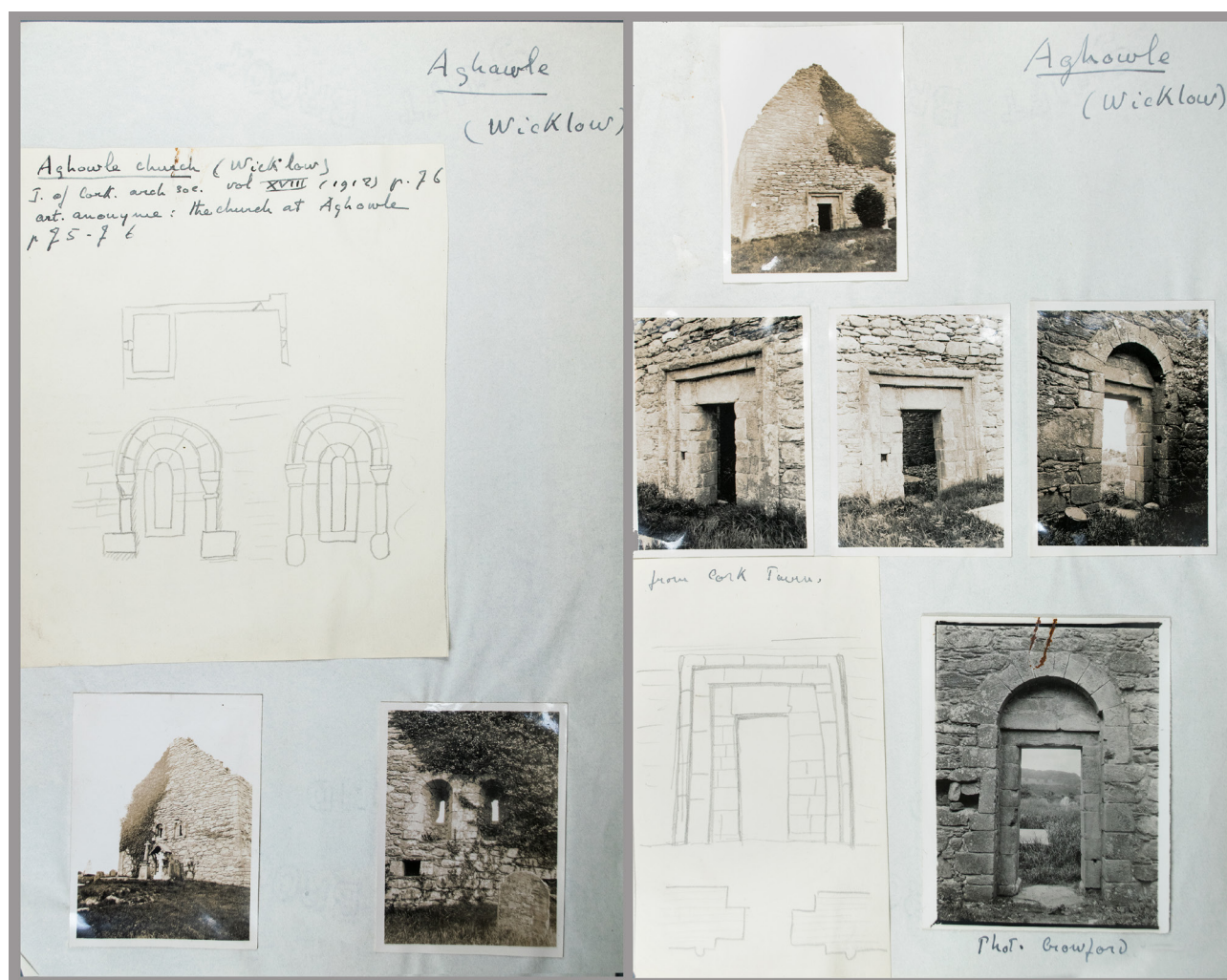


Fig 4 : Françoise Henry, Pencil Drawing, Ms. Notes, B/W Photographs, Aghowle (Wicklow (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy).

Mason (1877–1958). It strikes a dramatic frontal view but is less sharp than the angled from Henry's image⁶⁹. The overall quality of these photographs suggests that they were shot on medium or large format film with a good depth of field⁷⁰.

The photography in Henry's book *Irish Art* was a synergistic survey of visual media combined with text, organised under artistic and thematic headings: from Prehistory to Monasteries to European connections, sculpture, metalwork, illumination of manuscripts, and the presence and shifts represented by the Viking invasion, with the resulting dynamic decorative changes. Henry constructed a chronology for Irish Art matched with innate cataloguing skills, locating artefacts within an historical context. These elements underpin much of Henry's breadth of knowledge, inquisitive approach, and *métier*, as her own impressive diligence in recording art and architecture in context was apparent in this encyclopaedia of Irish art.

69 A. K. Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* op. cit., p. 112-113. For details on Porter and his art historical contribution disappearance, Kathryn Brush, « German Kunstwissenschaft and the Practice of Art History in America after World War I. Interrelationships, Exchanges, Contexts », *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 26, 1999, p. 7-36. Kenneth Conant, Edward Forbes, and Chandler Post, « A. Kingsley Porter », *Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum*, vol. 3, No. 1, November 1933, p. 2-5. Lucy Costigan, *Glenveagh Mystery, the Life, Work and Disappearance of Arthur Kingsley Porter*, Dublin, Merrion, 2013.

70 A. K. Porter, *The Crosses, and Culture of Ireland*, op. cit., p. 112-113.

This was an innovative phase of discovery and scholarship in the historiography of Irish art and architecture, and this research project seeks to reveal connections between an established scholar of Irish Medieval art, from Focillon to Émile Mâle (1862–1954), whose study of medieval iconography



Fig 5 : Françoise Henry, B/W Photograph, Ahenny North Cross, East Face (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy).

was central to medievalist formation and value. The iconography of the Irish High Cross was yet to be fully elucidated and provided Henry with such a field of discovery. Her work entailed a more detailed extension into the exploration of the identity and iconography of the Irish High Crosses. In Henry's case, she worked to establish that their datable chronology was fundamental. Her skilful interpretation of text from the *Annales*, which affected the reading of the iconography, had a bearing on her view on ornament. This also linked her to Crawford, whose polemical study of the symbolism of Irish carved ornament proceeded from the Clonmacnoise Cross of the Scriptures to examining the profusion of spiral, star, and interlace patterns⁷¹. Crawford's collection of photographs is also a central thread in her reaction to the iconography of the Irish High Cross study. She would later publish an entire volume on the Irish High Cross in 1964, as a culmination of this historic venture relating to iconography and Irish medieval art⁷². Her theoretical approaches and methodologies to writing about the past are a necessary aspect of this investigation, as part of ongoing research elucidating her key role in the development of the study of Irish Medieval art history.

⁷¹ H. S. Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament*, *op. cit.*, p. 19: Ahenny interlace is referred to.

⁷² F. Henry, *Irish High Crosses*, Dublin, Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland at the Three Candles, 1964, Pl. 18, Old Kilcullen, Flight into Egypt panel.

Other scholars significant to Henry's writings in terms of historical enquiry were her contemporaries: notable among those in her circle was the influence of Harold Leask. Leask published several architectural history works, including a secular study on Irish Castles (Dundalk, Dundalgean Press, first edition, 1941). Leask referenced Henry's *Sculpture irlandaise* in his work⁷³. Henry's first major publication in English on Irish Art, from 1940, contained collodion photographs in black and white, with many drawings and text. Some of these images and photographs were used to introduce her UCD archaeology lectures, wherein she also established chronologies for early medieval buildings. Her considered historical representations and contribution to the discourse from a chronological sequencing perspective, together with Leask, created a timely architectural history discourse. They both approached Irish medieval architecture from structure and dating of early stone church buildings and expanded to the planning and design of early Irish monasteries to include architectural sculpture as decorative additive details, with the mapping of architectural detail. This was of accumulated value to Henry, who viewed the object and evolution of sculptural forms over elemental architecture⁷⁴.

Historical context of Ireland during the 1930s

Françoise Henry lived through a historic time of great upheaval, from the First World War in France (1914–1918) to Ireland's own tumultuous history as she arrived during the fledgling Irish Free State in 1926⁷⁵. It was a time of profound transformation, described by archaeologist Howard Kilbride-Jones (1907–1995) as a period of simplicity and of consolidation in an impoverished country where money was unavailable⁷⁶. After a decade of upheaval in Ireland, there was a promise of new beginnings following the War of Independence and an uncertain peace after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1922. The Provisional Government closed the Museum to re-open it in 1925 with the new title of National Museum of Ireland (NMI). The publication in 1932 by its Director, Adolf Mahr (1932–1937/1938), of a volume on Early Christian Art in Ireland, had a bearing on Henry's research, considering sculptural sources linked to the iconographic discourse and context⁷⁷. That same year, Françoise Henry gave a lecture at the Congress of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences at King's College London on enamels, which was noted and attended by Kilbride-Jones and Mahr⁷⁸.

The first President of University College Dublin (UCD; 1908–1940), Professor of Engineering, Dr Denis Coffey, led UCD through some of the most tumultuous times and sanctioned a new course in the history of European Painting, established by painter Sarah Purser and Sir John Purser Griffiths,

73 H. G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

74 F. Henry, *Irish Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 73-86.

75 <https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Art-and-Industry-Collections/Art-Industry-Collections-List/Other/Collecting-policies-of-the-Museum-through-the-year/1914-1927-The-Birth-of-the-National-Museum-of-Ireland>; P. Harbison, *The Golden Age of Irish Art, The Medieval Achievement, 600-1200*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1999, p. 2-15, and R. Moss, « Introduction : The Irishness of Medieval Irish Art and Architecture », in *Ead.* (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 1-8, here 6-7.

76 Howard E. Kilbride-Jones, « Adolf Mahr », *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 7, No. 3, Autumn 1993), p. 29-30.

77 Adolf Mahr, *Christian Art in Ancient Ireland*, Dublin, Stationary Office, 1932, p. 17-22. Adolf Mahr's volume was published on behalf of the Government of the Irish Free State.

78 F. Henry, « Émailleurs d'Occident », *Préhistoire*, t. II, fasc. 1, 1933, p. 65 sqq. See H. Kilbride-Jones, « Adolf Mahr », *art. cit.*, p. 29-30.

with Henry as the instructor⁷⁹. Returning to Ireland in 1935, Henry played a role in the development of the history of painting and archaeology from a European context. After the Irish Universities Act in 1908, academic roles were being established and defined for Humanities and languages. Dr Brendan O’Riordan was Assistant Keeper of the National Museum from 1927, and Professor R.A.S. MacAlister (1870–1950), a biblical archaeologist, was professor of Celtic archaeology at UCD from 1909–1943 and contributed to many excavations and worked at the Hill of Tara⁸⁰. Reliant on the archaeology world of MacAlister and O’Riordan, Henry developed a strong sense of her role and responsibility in teaching the history of works of art, much of this learned from the inspiring work of her grandfather. From an lecturer in the Department of French in 1934, her career developed in UCD and by the 1940s, she was lecturing in Archaeology and European Art, working on a study of Irish antiquities. She captured a large collection of photographs for use by her students. The illustrations of Irish art, mainly in the form of photographic negatives and prints, were available for viewing as part of the visual formation for enquiring art historians. The UCD Photographic archive is a testament to her exhaustive nature, as many monuments and sites in medieval Europe and museums were visited, recorded, and in the case of Ireland and Scotland, her extensive visits and excursions led to the gathering of a large number of photographs⁸¹. At the core of her methodology was the notion of comparison and an overlay of style. Some years later, Henry became Director of Studies in Archaeology and the History of European Painting. The nucleus of the History of Art Department (School of Art History and Social Policy) in University College Dublin is found in the Purser-Griffith lecture series on European painting, which she began in 1934.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Henry immersed herself in the war effort, becoming part of the Commission for the Restitution of Cultural Material, the Roberts Commission for the care of monuments and cultural material heritage at risk⁸². This commission monitored and managed the safe security of artworks. In 1940, her first publication in English on Irish art was printed in London by Methuen and Co., under adverse conditions. Based in London, Henry continued to work from the Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum⁸³.

Chorographer, excavations and elucidation

79 <https://www.dib.ie/biography/griffith-sir-john-purser-a3647>
<https://www.ucd.ie/arthistory/study/diplomapurser-griffithlectures/>
<https://www.ucd.ie/president/about/universityhistory/pastpresidents/drdenisjcoffey/>
<https://digital.ucd.ie/view-media/ivrla:14054/canvas/ivrla:14063>

80 Muiris O’ Sullivan, « R. A. S. Macalister », in P. Ní Chathain, S. Fitzpatrick and H. B. Clarke (eds.), *Pathfinders to the Past*, op. cit., p. 161-17.

81 See the FH UCD Photographic collection, UCD School of Archaeology: Dr Conor McDermott, archivist. Some 10,000 black and white photographs are collated and available online as thumbnails. It is an extensive catalogue of images and invaluable for the study of medieval Art In Europe, 1930-1980. Henry was present for the discovery of the Derrynaflan Hoard which is the last set of photographs that she entered into the archive, in 1980. Michael Ryan, « Ten Years of Early Irish Metalwork », *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 1994, vol. 10, 1994, p. 153-156.

82 Royal Irish Academy, FH/B3/74(1), for further details of the Roberts Commission involvement and letters of concern.

83 H. Richardson, « Bibliography of Dr Françoise Henry », art. cit.

Aspects of Henry's methodology suggest she worked as a chorographer, mapping topography first and providing a sense of morphology of the landscape, positioning sites in an environmental setting with cardinal points featured. As a mapmaker and topographer, the final image was a rough map drawn of the roads and sites of Valentia (Fig. 6)⁸⁴. This was in preparation for her research in Southwest Ireland, which coincided with her studies of beehive structures and the monastery of Skellig Michael. Henry approached her work with a first sketch response to map the sites of Valentia off the South-west coast. This coincided with her Skellig Michael survey dating from 1946. This unpublished map from her extensive survey work in the South-west of Ireland demonstrates an aerial and topographic perspective. The map details the circumnavigation roads of the Island and locates the sites and monuments of Valentia (Fig. 6). Her approach centred on mapping established the cardinal points and gave her a position from which to proceed. This provided an overview of the sites she intended to visit and gave her a checklist that had a bearing on her recording of sites in uncharted territories. In characteristic style, Henry used gridded paper to assist with the scale and reduction of delineations in terms of the road network and monuments with topography presented in view. From the Southwest towards Valentia Island, the coastline to the islands was full of stone cairns and stone monuments, which resembled to Henry the dry-stone shepherd's huts from the Vaucluse, France (*bories*). These images would occupy her with different levels of photographic production. Henry's original observations in her doctoral work on *Sculpture irlandaise* remained

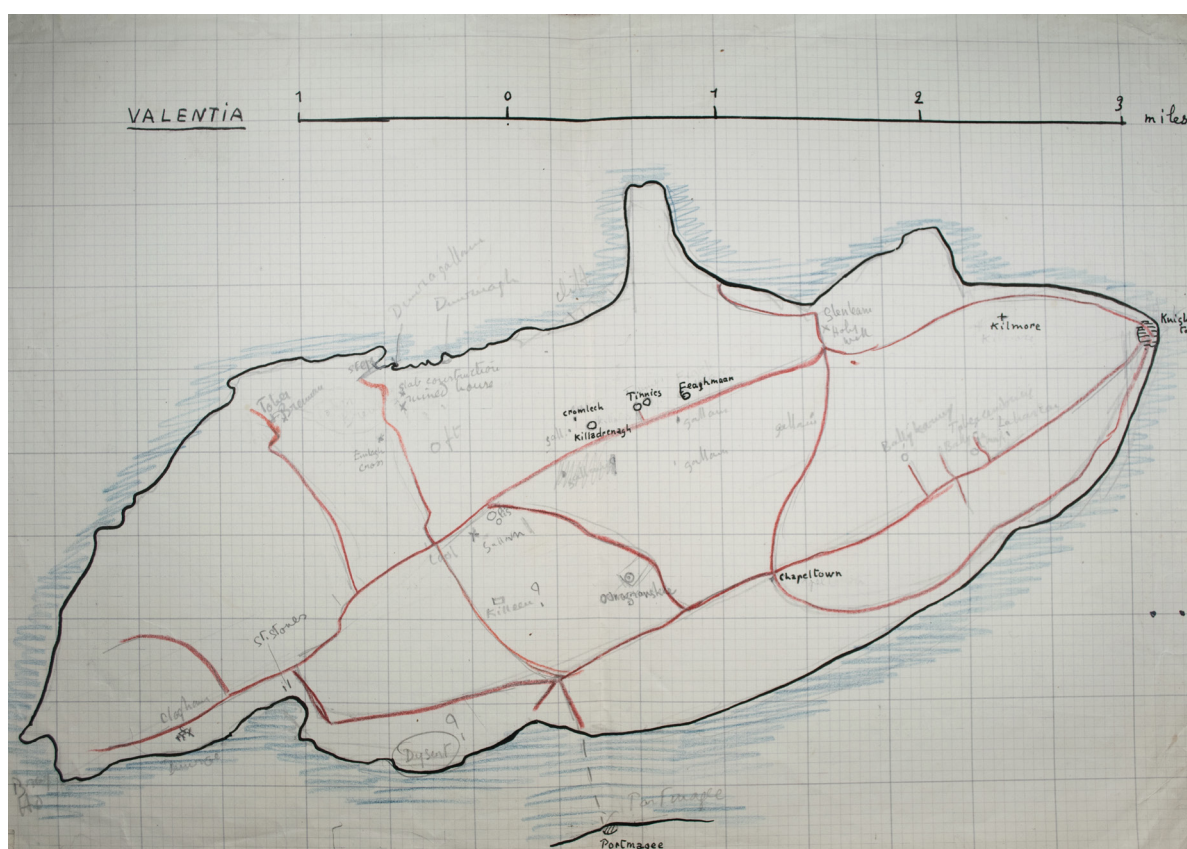


Fig 6 : Françoise Henry, Pencil Drawing, Map of Valentia Island, Co. Kerry (courtesy of Royal Irish Academy).

in these conclusions. Her observations on the stonework and corbelling were objectified, as she

viewed these surviving remains of the Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry as well as the stone beehive huts at Caherciveen, Co. Kerry, as construction, likening them to Skellig Michael in 1946 and 1947⁸⁵. The pattern was of remote identity, with the nature of sites questing from Caher Island beehives and Skellig slabs, likened to pyramids of schist, with the five huts 'covered by corbelled domes,' as she likened the Skellig large oratory to the shape of an upturned boat⁸⁶. Henry was prolific and profound in the writing arising from parallels in contrasting materials, as she knew the construction of shepherd's huts in Vaucluse. These comparative sites assisted her with interpretations of building techniques and enabled her to make comparisons when interpreting the dry-stone monuments in Skellig.

The same map style is also used in the layout of the Island sites for Inishkea North, with the use of pink and blue jotter squared paper noted to apply a grid onto which the scale of the map was realised with the North point and monumental details inscribed beside the roads or access and waypoints⁸⁷. In both cases, there was a chorographer's approach with visualising the geomorphology of the landscape and the monuments set within the landscape. The latitude and topography were also observed. Henry absorbed this technique from the systematic approach of Hubert. In 1937, she visited the island of Inishkea North (Co. Mayo), off the Mayo coast, in advance of excavations in search of early medieval remains. She found cross-slabs and enough evidence to return the following year and again in 1946 and 1950. She kept technical notes on the archaeological material but also personal journals recording her observations on the natural world and native culture. In parallel, she carried out a considerable amount of land survey and archaeological excavation at Glendalough⁸⁸ and excavations at Inishkea, which have since been published from 1937–1938 and 1945–1952⁸⁹.

Permission was sought from the National Museum in 1950 for Henry and a team of local men at Glendalough to row across the steep slopes of the southern edge of the upper lake to Temple na Scelig⁹⁰. Situated on a shelf above the south shore of the Upper Lake, surrounded by steep cliffs

85 F. Henry, « Early Irish Monasteries, Boat-Shaped Oratories and Beehive Huts », *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, 1948, vol. 11, No. 4, 1948, p. 296-304 and *Ead.*, « Early Monasteries, Beehive Huts, and Dry-Stone Houses in the Neighbourhood of Caherciveen and Waterville (Co. Kerry) », *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, vol. 58, 1956-1957, p. 45-166.

86 M. J. O' Kelly, « Church Island, near Valentia, Co. Kerry », *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 59, 1958, p. 55-57.

87 <https://www.ria.ie/news/library-library-blog/french-art-historian-ireland-o>

88 Antony Corns, Gary Devlin, Conor McDermott, Mathew Seaver, Rob Shaw and Graeme Warren, « Temple-na-Skellig, St Kevin's Bed, Glendalough », *Archaeology Ireland Heritage Guide*, No. 94, 2021, p. 1-3. For more reading, Charles Doherty, Linda Doran and Mary Kelly (eds), *Glendalough: City of God*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2011, p. 2-35.

89 F. Henry, « Remains of the Early Christian Period on Inishkea North, Co. Mayo », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 75, 1945, p. 127-155; *Ead.*, « Early Christian Slabs and Pillar Stones in the West of Ireland », *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 67, 1937: 265-279. See also detailed characterisations Barbara Wright (ed.) « Francoise Henry, *Les Îles d'Inishkea. Carnets personnels*, Lille, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2012 », *Irish Journal of French Studies*, vol. 13, 2013, p. 180-182 and Janet Marquardt, *Francoise Henry in Co. Mayo: The Inishkea Journals*, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2021, p. 1-22.

90 <https://glendalough.wicklowheritage.org/topics/archaeology/a-monastery-among-the-glens>

and only approachable by boat, this was the most westerly of the churches at Glendalough, partly reconstructed in the twelfth century as a small single-celled rectangular structure with a twin-light window in the east gable, similar to nearby St. Saviour's church.

Henry and Ireland's contribution to Europe

After the Second World War, Henry returned to Ireland to take up her teaching position again, which comprised a long duration in a post at UCD, the UCD Department of Archaeology and UCD Department of Art History in 1966. An investigation into her circle serves to establish a forum for the historiography of Ireland's Medieval past. The culmination of her publishing career was the three-volume work in French and English, which appeared between 1963 and 1970, examining thematically and chronologically Irish art in the early Christian period, during the Viking invasions and in the Romanesque period⁹¹. Henry's contribution was to the concept of 'Celtic art,' presenting a unity as a consecutive whole to early Medieval art, with several continuous interconnected strands to give a clear view of the development of Irish art. This direction also underlined the contribution the art of Ireland made to the European stage. This periodisation was relevant from the advent of Early Christians to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. The series on Irish Art was a three-part set, yet each volume was standalone, and each had an index of sites and monuments. Primary sources and textual sources were investigated, followed by manuscript exploration and metalwork with iconographical detailing to assist in the interpretation of carving. This was an encyclopaedic endeavour, with detailed interest in architectural sculpture, featuring stone crosses and other inscribed material, serving as an anthology for scholars and students of art history and archaeology⁹².

This technique of synthesis was a central element to Henry's œuvre, using photography, full-size colour plates, black and white photographs, maps and drawings emphasised by Henry, presenting Ireland's art historical contribution, which had previously been approached from the view of an outsider rather than as an integrated and significant player in the formation of European cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Henry's investigation from the making of Irish stone carving and the iconographical motifs connected to monastic sites was groundbreaking. Her later books demonstrated a significant contribution to Irish material to the art of Europe, spanning from the early Christian period to the coming of the Normans in the twelfth century. Her original approach to the categorisation of ornaments in Insular manuscripts, considered in relation to the profusion and production of

91 F. Henry, *L'Art irlandais*, Saint-Léger-Vauban, Zodiaque, 1963-1964, 3 vol.

92 This trio of volumes were published in France in 1965-1970 in English to trace the development of Irish Art. *Irish Art in the early Christian Period to 800 AD*; *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions 800-1020 AD* were later complemented with *Irish Art in the Romanesque Period 1020-1170 AD*. The volumes featured black and white and colour and monochrome plates printed by les Presses monastiques and l'imprimerie Darantière, Dijon, France.

illuminated Insular manuscripts, especially with the scribes and their individual artistry in mind, was novel. This singular view of identity led to the observation of certain typologies of ornament, spanning from interlace to zoomorphic to anthropomorphic patterns, bridging from her early work on carved sculpture to her monumental study on the Book of Kells. Françoise Henry came to Ireland as a young student and became established at University College Dublin as a Director of Studies, working in the French Department and in the School of Art History in 1966.

From the published works, archival records and the substantial collection of field notes in the Royal Irish Academy and papers and photographs in University College Dublin, the dedication of Henry and her commitment to the study of Irish medieval art are evident. Her legacy exists in her works, which formed the basis and framework from which the subject was debated, with many representations of projects and extensive literature briefly demonstrating the range of activities and aspects of investigation that were part of her ongoing research. The multi-faceted approach, ranging across disciplines, demonstrates Henry's theoretical approach and methodology to writing about the past. Her energy and powerful mind demonstrated an expansive ability to bring together a broad spectrum of ideas and pioneering key research elements into her written work. Her connection to the earlier published works of Margaret Stokes is significant in the historiography of Irish early medieval art. Both were independent women who achieved new insights. Margaret Stokes raised empirical questions concerning style, external influences, and the impact of Irish peregrination in Europe during the Carolingian period. Henry continued this line of inquiry, focusing on the development of Irish art and the degree of influence that could be measured. This was a pioneering phase of discovery and scholarship in the historiography of early medieval Irish art and architecture. Henry, in her method of working, created explanatory drawings, translated inscriptions in situ, visited sites, and recorded stone sculpture and architectural details, also using photography techniques to highlight the details. Characterised as a 'femme des champs,' Henry laboured 'in the fields' with energy and synergy, as a contemporary quaestor creating a eulogy to times past and with the painterly style of a modernist painter—a woman writing about the art, architecture, and sculpture that characterised Irish medieval art.⁹³ Thus, Henry recorded and developed the field of scholarship of Irish art. By her eminent work, Henry was a legendary figure who deserves great recognition for her service to Irish art and European cultural heritage.

93 A recent painting by Margaret Stokes (1915-1995) of a doorway from Françoise Henry's house in Lindry in Burgundy where Henry died in 1982, has surfaced. Stokes was a cousin of the Irish artist Mainie Jellett (1897-1944), who gave her art lessons from an early age. Stokes was a pupil at The Royal Hibernian Academy School and she won the Purser Griffith Scholarship. She Glasgow School of Art and later went to the Edinburgh College of Art where she studied W. G. Gillies, the distinguished Scottish painter. She returned to Dublin and taught at Alexandra College. This connects Henry to the dynamic group of modernist painters in Ireland. Margaret Stokes was first influenced by her cousin, Margaret Stokes' work was featured in 'Irish Women Artists: 1870-1970' exhibition (2014). <https://www.ria.ie/blog/a-french-art-historian-in-ireland/>